



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Issued by the Department of Transportation
on the 25th day of March, 2003

Essential air service at

DUBUQUE, IOWA

under 49 U.S.C. 41731 *et seq.*

Served: March 28, 2003

Docket OST-2003-14517

ORDER ALLOWING SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

Background

On February 12, 2003, Mesaba Aviation, Inc., d/b/a Northwest Airlink, filed a 90-day notice of intent to suspend its unsubsidized scheduled service at Dubuque, Iowa, as of May 13, 2003. Mesaba filed notice pursuant to the Department's "one-third rule": section 323.3(a)(5) of the Department's Regulations (14 CFR 323.3(a)(5)) requires a carrier to file a 90-day notice if its proposed suspension of service would reduce the total number of passenger seats linking the affected community to a Federal Aviation Administration-designated hub by 33 percent or more.

Mesaba currently operates three nonstop round trips each weekday and five each weekend to Minneapolis/St. Paul with 34-seat Saab SF340 aircraft. Dubuque also receives unsubsidized service by American Eagle Airlines, Inc., which operates three nonstop round trips each weekday and five each weekend to Chicago with 36-seat Embraer ERJ135 regional jets.¹

The community did not respond to Mesaba's notice.

Essential Air Service Determination

Dubuque's essential air service determination, as last established by Order 84-5-74, May 21, 1984, required a minimum of two nonstop or one-stop round trips a day to Chicago providing at least 67 inbound and outbound seats.²

Decision

We will allow Mesaba to suspend service at Dubuque as of May 13, as it intends. American Eagle will continue to provide the community with a link to the national air transportation network. As noted earlier, American Eagle operates three nonstop round trips each weekday and five each weekend to Chicago, Dubuque's designated hub, with 36-seat regional jets. American

¹ See the Appendix for a map.

² Order 84-5-74 required capacity sufficient to accommodate 40 inbound and outbound passengers, which continues to represent the maximum guarantee under the essential air service program. Under the 60-percent load-factor standard subsequently established by the Airport and Airway Safety and Capacity Expansion Act of 1987, P.L. 100-223, the number of guaranteed seats became 67: $40/0.60 = 66.7$.

Eagle's capacity of 108 seats each weekday and 180 each weekend easily meets Dubuque's guarantee of 67 daily seats, which represents the maximum seating guarantee under the essential air service program. Consequently, Dubuque's remaining service will remain well above the maximum level that the program was designed to maintain.

Before Mesaba suspends service, however, we expect it to contact all passengers who hold reservations for flights that will be suspended, to inform them of the suspension and the continued availability of American Eagle's service, and to assist them in arranging alternate transportation.

This order is issued under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.56a(f).

ACCORDINGLY,

1. We allow Mesaba Aviation, Inc., d/b/a Northwest Airlink, to suspend its service at Dubuque, Iowa, as of May 13, 2003;
2. This docket will remain open until further order of the Department; and
3. We will serve copies of this order on the mayor and airport manager of Dubuque, Iowa; Mesaba Aviation, Inc., d/b/a Northwest Airlink; and American Eagle Airlines, Inc.

By:

READ C. VAN DE WATER
Assistant Secretary for Aviation
and International Affairs

(SEAL)

*An electronic version of this document is available
on the World Wide Web at <http://dms.dot.gov>*

DUBUQUE, IOWA, AND THE SURROUNDING REGION

